

**I have long worked to address Social Security's future and think we should take action sooner rather than later. I want us all to work with the public to prevent cuts in benefits that are coming in 25 years if nothing is done. Social Security, however, doesn't contribute to the deficit. Including it in the budget sequestration negotiations only complicates the conversation. A "chained index" would be hard for me to support unless it doesn't harm the very old and lower income recipients.**

Congress should be pursuing a balanced approach to restore our country's "fiscal fitness." There are a number of commonsense reforms that Democrats and Republicans should support that would reduce the debt and put us back on a fiscally sustainable path.

One example is subsidies for large agribusiness. Billions of taxpayer dollars go to unsustainable farming practices that are bad for the environment, the taxpayer, and Oregon's family farmers and ranchers. This is why I've worked to end the wasteful direct payment farm subsidy program that funnels payments to large corporate agribusinesses. This action could save up to \$28.4 billion over ten years that could be used to reduce the deficit.

Another example is reining in the bloated Pentagon budget. Ending the war in Afghanistan, reducing the global footprint of military bases, and "right-sizing" our nuclear arsenal would save hundreds of billions over the next ten years.

Extending tax cuts to middle class families that make less than \$250,000 a year is a temporary action. We should address the larger issue of overall tax reform. The tax code must be simplified, taking actions like eliminating the alternative minimum tax, limiting "loopholes," broadening the base and lowering tax rates. A tax code fairly and efficiently administered will reduce evasion and make compliance easier. This will help us fund important services and rebuild our country.

I will continue to push for commonsense proposals that will save money, strengthen the economy, and protect important government services that Oregon families depend upon.